

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 05258

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, JO, IS, XF
SUBJECT: MILITARY MOVEMENTS ON JORDAN-ISRAEL BORDER

1. JAF CINC BIN SHAKER MADE A POINT OF TELLING ME
PRIVATELY THIS MORNING IN CONNECTION WITH A VISIT TO HIS
OFFICE FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE THAT HE HAD SPENT A TRYING
NIGHT LAST EVENING ANALYZING ISRAELI MOVEMENTS AND RE-
DEPLOYING IN RETURN SOME OF HIS OWN FORCES.

2. HE MADE SEVERAL POINTS:
--ISRAELIS HAD MOVED ARMOR (TANKS AND APC'S) INTO JORDAN
VALLEY AREA AROUND BEIT SHEAN AND SAMAKH AND HAD OCCUPIED
MANY PREVIOUSLY VACANT OBSERVATION POSTS IN THE VALLEY;
--JORDANIANS THOUGHT THE ISRAELI MOVES WERE BASED ON A
COMBINATION OF FACTORS INCLUDING REACTION TO RECENT
FEDAYEEN RAID ON SETTLEMENT NEAR BEIT SHEAN NORTH OF
JERICHO, FINAL EVACUATION FROM LEBANON, AND POSSIBLE
EXPECTATION THAT ISRAELIS WOULD SEE MORE FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY
FROM JORDAN SIDE NOW THAT UNIFIL WAS FIXED IN SOUTH
LEBANON;
--JAF REDEPLOYED SOME TANK AND TOW UNITS IN AREA OPPOSITE
ISRAELI MOVEMENTS AND SAID THAT IF ISRAELIS PLAN TO CROSS
RIVER FOR RETALIATORY STRIKE WE WILL FIGHT, THERE SHOULD
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BE NO CONFUSION ABOUT THAT POINT;
--BIN SHAKER ALSO SAID THAT FEDAYEEN WHO ATTACKED SETTLE-
MENT NEAR JERICHO WERE PICKED UP BY ARMY PATROLS TRYING
TO CROSS BACK INTO SYRIA. THERE WERE FOUR CAPTURED AND
ORIGINAL PARTY INCLUDED FIVE, ONE OF WHOM HAD BEEN KILLED;

3. BIN SHAKER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT GOJ THROUGH U.S. HAD

WARNED ISRAELIS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO OF PENDING RAID AS WELL AS ONE ACROSS THE NORTHERN DEAD SEA WHICH WAS STILL A POSSIBILITY ALTHOUGH JAF WAS ON THE LOOKOUT. ISRAELIS SHOULD KNOW THAT JORDAN WAS WORKING AS HARD AS THEY TO STOP INFILTRATION, BUT SOMETIMES SOME WILL GET THROUGH THE BEST EFFORTS OF BOTH SIDES.

4. COMMENT: BIN SHAKER IS WORRIED ABOUT RETALIATORY RAID HOWEVER UNREASONABLE THAT MIGHT SEEM ON BASIS OF WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE HAPPENED FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE. WITH KING'S WEDDING CELEBRATIONS PLANNED FOR NEXT TWO DAYS IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY BAD. SHAKER HAS NOT YET BRIEFED KING ON LAST NIGHT'S MOVES HE SAID. HE TOLD ME ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE I BELIEVE HE CLEARLY HOPES WE WILL WARN ISRAELIS OFF ANYTHING THEY MAY HAVE PLANNED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS SORT OF AN ARMORED THRUST IS PROBABLY NOT EITAN'S STYLE, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING TEL AVIV COULD DO TO FIND OUT WHAT IS GOING ON AND, IF IT SEEMS USEFUL, TO DO WHAT IS POSSIBLE ABOUT COOLING THE SITUATION. I WOULD ESPECIALLY APPRECIATE PROTECTION FOR THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION, IF NECESSARY STATING ONLY THAT IT COMES TO US FROM RELIABLE SOURCES, IN ORDER TO AVOID PRESS LEAKS IN ISRAEL OR ELSEWHERE WHICH MIGHT DESTROY RELATIONSHIP HERE. PICKERING

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